White-Lion Club,

LATE RIOT AND DOCK TAX.

AN

ADDRESS

TO THE PUBLIC,

Wherein these alarming and disgraceful Topics are discussed.

BY

THOMAS LEE.

"From the hour that the spirit of resentment first flushed in the cheek of man, it has been awakened by contumely and oppreſſion: he is a creature made to be irritated by injustice; and until every noble and every vivid feeling is subdued within him, he will be excited to retrieve his rights, and redress his wrongs."

"No, No! I am against the Dockers; Rogues!"

DR. JOHNSON.

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TO THE

PUBLIC

OF THE

CITY OF BRISTOL.

GENTLEMEN! Notwithſtanding the abominable artifices by which your minds were attempted to be agitated to ſanction the adoption of meaſures, that might eventually have cauſed the maſſacre of a large portion of your fellow ſubjects, I have witneſſed with peculiar ſatisfaction, that a ſpirit yet ſurvives and yet exiſts, which in time may expreſs and diſplay itſelf in a language and conduct very different indeed, from the abject lowlineſs which for ſome years has diſgraced you. You were aſſailed and incited by the moſt murdrous and inflammatory watch-word, but, your good ſenſe as well as your humanity, chaſtened and diſappointed the intemperance of at leaſt one of your magiſtrates;—of this in future.

The topics upon which as a fellow-citizen, I may preſume to addreſs you, are painful to enumerate and revolting to

dwell upon; but, the Dock Scheme is one of many which comes immediately home to every one of you; and to that topic, with the conduct of the White-Lion Club and with the cauſes of the late Riot, I ſhall confine myſelf for the preſent.

If, I have not addreſſed you before upon the ſubject of the Dock Bill, my ſilence aroſe from a belief that ſome gentleman more immediately intereſted in the queſtion, as well as more able and better informed reſpecting it, would ſuperſede the propriety of another's interference. It is true that ſome perſons have been pleaſed, anonymouſly, to expreſs their ſentiments upon the queſtion; but in all anonymous writing, where individuals, or, where a body of individuals are cenſured, there is a want of manlineſs, and no earneſt offered to the public, that the arguments reſorted to by the writer are the real ſuggeſtions of an honeſt and independent mind. If, upon a peruſal of the writings of thoſe who have preceded me, I had diſcovered that your rights or intereſts had been attended to as much as they deſerved to have been attended to, I ſhould have been ſilent; and you will readily perceive gentlemen, that I have been in no haſte to obtrude my ſentiments upon your conſideration.

It ſeems to me, that the principle as to whether the Inhabitants of this city ought to pay, or not, for benefits which others muſt experience, has been artfully kept out of view, not only in thoſe writings, but in a late public diſcuſſion at the Guildhall; quantum and duration of Tax having been only attended to. Throughout the diſcuſſion on the Dock Bills, no gentleman broadly and fairly diſcuſſes or alludes to this queſtion; namely, What has an inhabitant of this city to do with the enſuring ſix pounds or ſix pence per cent. to Mr. Alderman Daniel, or, to any one elſe, upon any given ſum, of otherwiſe uſeleſs capital, which that

Mr. Alderman Daniel or Mr. any body elſe may chuſe to lay out? I mention this gentleman's name, I hope not invidiouſly, and certainly, without any intention of giving perſonal offence, becauſe I am told, that gentleman was one of the original promoters of the Dock Scheme, and that he is much intereſted in its completion. Now gentlemen, it ſeems to me to be common ſenſe to DENY, that as an inhabitant of this city, I ought to be compelled to contribute to Mr. Alderman Daniel's profit in any way, more than I may chuſe to contribute; but it ſhould ſeem, that Mr. Bathurſt has been induced to think it matter of conſcience to lend his grateful aid to this ſame Alderman and his colleagues in furthering their new deſires to violate my property. It is true, Mr. Bathurſt has already enabled Mr. Alderman Daniel and his colleagues to thruſt their hands into our pockets and to transfer from thence for their own benefit our property; but I muſt not cenſure an Act of Parliament, however you may feel the exactions which that Act of Parliament enables, and has enabled, the Dock Company to make and compel. If the example of Liverpool ſhall ſtill be urged, to that I reply, that the merchants of Liverpool waited till their foreign trade had ſo increaſed, that the buſineſs of the port could not be carried on without ſome material alteration being made: whereas theſe gentlemen, whoſe over-grown capitals and monopolizing conduct are proverbial, do not ſtep forward, even on pretence of the public good, until all foreign trade is effectually driven away by the oppreſſive exactions of the Corporation, and by the monopolizing and depreſſing ſpirit which has actuated, and ſtill actuates, the great mercantile houſes in Briſtol, with ſcarcely an exception.

It cannot be denied, that this may be my mode of repreſenting the facts; but they are not the leſs true; and, if they can be repreſented more advantageouſly for the honor and conſcience of the worthy Alderman, his colleagues

and Mr. Bathurſt, the junto will be cleanſed from a foul and unſightly ſtain, to which the late bemudding would appear as burniſhed gold.

I aver gentlemen, a more barefaced language can never be held, than that which would declare that, directly, or, indirectly, I ought in Juſtice, preſently, or remotely to benefit Mr. Alderman Daniel by ſuffering a dilapidation of that which muſt ſupport my family and enable me to pay my ſhare of the Taxes due to the ſtate; or, in other words, that Law is oppreſſive, unjuſt and inſolent, which would compel me to pay an unprincipled Tax, which may be raiſed for the furtherance of the Dock Scheme.

Gentlemen, I do certainly feel myſelf entitled to lament your want of public ſpirit and of private feeling, both or either of which, might have been ſufficiently aroufed and juſtified to have reſiſted ſo monſtrous, and under all circumſtances of declining trade and public burthens, ſo unheard of an exaction, for the benefit of a company, which ought juſtly to have been abhorred, dreaded and deteſted as uſurers, had it not been for the friendly aid of Mr. Bathurſt, who ſo eminently contributed to further their deſperate and unprincipled views. Gentlemen, there may be a ſet of men who would indeed protect and cover you as vultures protect and cover lambs; firſt to ſpread over their helpleſs victims their portentous wings, and then mercileſsly and unpenitentially to devour them.

Good Heaven! are not the exactions of the ſtate ſufficiently enormous? are we not paying, have we not paid in many inſtances ninety per cent. more than we ought to pay, provided the money contributed had been honeſtly expended? and are Mr. Alderman Daniel and the reſt of the Dock Company, aſſiſted by the majority of the White-Lion Club to immolate upon the altars of their avarice your own hard earnings and humble ſavings, wrung from your ſufferings, your wants, and your privations? are times of War and of unparallelled Taxation proper for reſorting to

the furtherance of Schemes, to the accompliſhment of which, the poor are to be compelled to contribute, but which can only benefit thoſe who have money to embark in them?*

Perhaps it may be ſaid in reſpect of the Dock Bill, that what has been done, has been done by Act of Parliament, and that, therefore, any language in cenſure of meaſures ſo ſanctioned is illegal and unwarrantable. That very illegal and unwarrantable language which, I, however know to be neither, I mean to hold with reſpect to the further propoſitions of the Dock Company, and I defy the Dock Company with the Houſe of Commons at its devotion, if ſuch a fact were poſſible, to make that to be reaſonable, which in itſelf is unreaſonable; or that to be juſt, which in itſelf is unjuſt. The truth as it at preſent ſtands, is, that the rich or monied man, benefits by a Scheme which the poor or pennyleſs man is expected to pay for the accompliſhing! Yet the cry of "No Popery!" was imagined to be ſufficient to obſcure ſuch deteſtable colluſion and ſubterfuge,—but to perfect, to conſummate the propoſed ſcandalous and inſulting violation of the pocket of the inhabitants, the volunteers were to be put under arms, and the militias were to be fetched from their cantonments, for what? WERE THE NEW WATERS OF THE CANAL, LIKE THE BLOOD-STAINED BRIDGE, TO BE AUGMENTED AND SUFFUSED WITH THE LIFE-STREAM OF INNOCENCE AND HILARITY? Who gave information that a riot was intended? I do aſſert that if a riot were intended, thoſe who ſeconded the war-whoop of "No Popery," can give the beſt account of the conſpiracy. No! No! the mortification at ſeeing "No Popery," had failed in ſupporting the Member who had ſupported the

* Let not opulent men ſtop at a Wing of an Infirmary; let them go on in the ſcheme of ſyſtematizing Beggary,—let Briſtol, like the towns of Spain and Italy be remarkable for charitable Inſtitutions; happily, they yet far, very far ſurpaſs us in *charitable deeds*.—We hitherto have been *juſt* to our poor: ſo much charity implies quite as much injuſtice or folly, as I ſhall ſpeedily ſhew; not pardoxically, but in ſober reaſoning and ſolid truth.

Dock Bill rankled in theſe men's minds, and the ſoldiery, were ſummoned, merely, that by another artifice a belief may be induced, that theſe White-Lion and Dock Gentlemen, are the only honeſt, worthy, and independent men of this city; but in truth, to ſhew thoſe who would murmur againſt the Dock Company what they have to expect.

It may ſeem very extraordinary, that, as the difficulty preſented itſelf to Mr. Bathurſt relative to a determination between the different parties who propoſed this or that meaſure as an improvement of the Dock, that gentleman ſhould not have recollected, that the intereſt of a third party required attention: If he had done ſo, would the INHABITANTS of this place have been in any way called upon to contribute to ſecure the emoluments of the Dock Company?

I have ſaid before, and I am not afraid to ſay it again, that I deprecate theſe meaſures of ſome rich or monied men; ſince they muſt, by little and little, beget a fatal belief, that the horrors of a revolution are tranſient and ſupportable, when compared with the vexatious exactions of over-weening Dock Companies and Corporations, realizing their ſpeculations at a moment of difficulty, danger, and poverty, unparallelled in the hiſtory of theſe dominions.

The Volunteers themſelves, I know well, knew better—the bayonet of a citizen will be ill ſheathed in the body of a citizen, and could any man who adviſed the ſummoning the Volunteers, be ſo brain-ſick as to imagine that the freemen and freeholders of Briſtol, and *who had been mocked with an Election in the morning*, would have conſented to have been made the inſtruments of the Majority of the White-Lion Club, or of that of the Dock Company in *deſtroying their cheated fellow-citizens at night?*

It was an unconſtitutional reſort by a civil Magiſtrate having legal power to call to his aid a civil force, as an unneceſſary meaſure of diſmay it is indefenſible, and ought to be contemplated with the moſt lively jealouſy; ſince, if ſuch a meaſure be ſuffered to paſs unreprehended, the volunteer defence may become an engine in the hands of any faction, whether that of a White-Lion Club, a Dock Company, or any deteſtable conſpiracy againſt the liberties and properties of the ſubject.

In this language, I ſpeak the language of the laws and proviſions of our anceſtors, and I ſhall not, fearfully, be induced to maintain ſilence, when I ſee thoſe venerable inſtitutions forgotten or trodden under feet.

The Mayor of Briſtol ought to have relied, in the firſt inſtance, upon the Civil power—he ought to have cauſed a due number of extra' conſtables to have been ſworn in, and then, indeed, if he had found his authority and means deſpiſed, inſulted, and reſiſted, he might have been juſtified in calling in the aid of the military.

I have not ſcrupled to identify the majority of the White-Lion Club, and the majority of the Dock Company together: a ſpirit of coercion and of intimidation ſeemed to influence, and to animate thoſe factions, and your money or your life would have been Language too appropriate for them to hold and for the inſulted people to have heard. I aſſert that the cauſing the return of the ſoldiery from their cantonments and the drum beating to arms, were acts in direct violation of the Law of the Land, for ſecuring the freedom of Election: By that Law, the Soldiery are not to return till One Day after the Poll ſhall have closed.* Whereas

* Vide Blackstone, page 179, and 8 George 2d, Chap. 30.

It would appear that the Mayor of this City has been advised to take a ſtep from the penalty attached to which, nothing ſhort of application to Parliament for indemnity can relieve him. How

the Soldiery were re-called the Day of the Election, and were I on my oath I ſhould ſay, *without apparent cauſe as far as my perſonal obſervation extended*, and without the legal Forms preſcribed by the Conſtitution, or ſanctioned by uſage, having being obſerved previouſly to the beat of drum. This is a charge ſo mighty and ſo heinous, if true, that it is hoped, the legal adviſers of the Mayor will extricate him from an imputation which at preſent appears to be as unprecedented as illegal. On this head I ſhall now be ſilent, but heartily deſire, for the honour of the Magiſtracy, that this meaſure may be proved to have been juſtifiable from neceſſity, and that I am miſtaken in what I have ever concluded to be the law of the land.

I deſire not to cavil; I may ſtand alone in this opinion too; it's not the leſs true; and, though I ſhould live alone, and die alone with ſuch opinions, I ſhall little heſitate to the laſt breath to exclaim, the Law! the Law! the Law! and the Conſtitution.

I mean nothing perſonal with the reſpect to his Worſhip the Mayor, but it may ſeem a little extraordinary, that a Magiſtrate who ſo conſcientiouſly refuſed to preſide, when the unprincipled propoſitions of the Dock Company were to be canvaſſed, could yet lend himſelf to deſire the readineſs of the Military, when "No Dock Tax!" was vociferated and ſo feelingly ſubſtituted for "No Popery."

Gentlemen, you will doubtleſs lament the outrage offered to the perſon and to the ſupporters of Mr. Bathurſt, on the day of Election, and in that lamentation I truſt to be believed to be ſincere; but it appears, that

Mayor of Briſtol can have assumed to do that, which must have cost the Secretary of war his office, I am at a loss to know; but I shall feel myself at liberty further to examine this violation of the freedom of Election.

thoſe who would have inflamed the minds of the people, do not always, whatever their intentions, wicked, or charitable may be, altogether controul the actions of the people when ſo inflamed.

Gentlemen, as you all probably well know, I had firſt the misfortune of hearing the war-whoop of "No Popery!" menaced in my ears. When, in the language of peace, in ſubmiſſion to good government, and in acknowledgement of lawful and conſtitituonal authority, I expreſſed a wiſh that chriſtian forbearance, goſpel conciliation, and digniſied equity ſhould have been allowed to diſtinguiſh an enlightned adminiſtration, agreeably to the ſentiments contained in Lord Grenville's admirable letter to Dr. Gaſkin, I was aſſailed, even in the preſence of the Magiſtracy, by every calumny, violence, outrage and contumely, that the worſt conduct of the worſt men, could and did reſort to.

Notwithſtanding the coarſe, brutal, and unfounded aſperſions caſt upon me by ſome low people, who are, well known, and notwithſtanding the gentleman, who ſeconded the Reſolutions I propoſed, and which have been printed in the Morning Chronicle, Mr. Robarts, a banker's ſon, and as heir of Sir John Chapman, once in poſſeſſion of £4000 a year, was menaced by a ruffian, who, when ſtripping was with difficulty reſtrained, even in the Guildhall, I little thought that the tide of violence would ſo ſoon have ſet directly oppoſite to the implied wiſhes of ſome, who if they did not provoke, certainly did little to reſtrain it, on the day the Addreſs to His Majeſty was moved.

When I ſaw in the fatal Blue of the White-Lion Club, the war-whoop of "No Popery," blazoned on Sunday fortnight in every part of the City, it required no ſhrewdneſs to gueſs, what was intended by thoſe, who directed

the printing of that war-whoop:—it was intended to raiſe, it was intended to excite a mob; and, were it in my power to trace the author of that paper, I ſhould not heſitate to proclaim him a common diſturber of the public peace: but, although the Devil may ſometimes be permitted to create a ſtorm, we ſometimes alſo may certainly believe, that Providence may chooſe to take the direction of it to himſelf. As I utterly abhor all mobs, whether for, or againſt the principles and feelings it is my pride to avow, namely, love of my Country, veneration of the Conſtitution, and charity for all mankind, I muſt, and do moſt heartily join in the reprobation of the ſcandalous and atrocious act of violence offered to the perſon of Mr. Bathurſt, when in the chair, by ſome cowardly, ferocious, and violent individuals: I am ſorry, that the cauſe was not otherwiſe identified, than by confounding the evil agency of the White-Lion Club with the obedience of Mr. Bathurſt to its dictates and inſtructions. Was it the uninterrupted ſucceſs in enſlaving the once free minds of free-Citizens, which has diſtinguiſhed the efforts of the members of the White-Lion Club, that ſo beſotted their hearts, that they could believe, that their war-whoop of "No Popery," for which there was no legitimate ground, could drown the cry of "No Dock Tax, no unneceſſary Taxes," for which exclamations the grounds are ſo ſtrong? Succeſs, indeed, renders ſome men blind, but it does not always take away all the ſenſes; and yet theſe men's tyrannic vanity was ſuch, their confidence in the fooliſh ſubmiſſion of the Freemen to their will, was ſo wretchedly miſplaced, that they thought their own vile and hypocritical artifices were to ſuperſede the feeling and avowal of real evil, of real ſuffering, and of real privation, which muſt be the conſequence of their Tyranny and of the further augmentation of the Dock Tax.

Put, gentlemen, the two exclamations together, No Popery! No Dock Tax! what is No Popery to the poor

man with a large family, occupying a ſmall Houſe, rated to the Taxes at the rack rent, and paying ſo dear for every article of the neceſſaries of life—what is No Popery to ſuch a man, ſo circumſtanced? Why truly, nothing.

This country yet ſuffers under Taxes that were levied to carry on a war againſt our brethren in America, to further particular Views of particular men—the country was not concerned, yet the country pays the coſt. Now, what is No Dock Tax? truly, this concerns the man I have above deſcribed; he cannot think of that Tax without bluſhing for his fellow-Citizens and bluſhing for himſelf, that every effort, ſhort of offending the Law was not made for oppoſing it. The augmentation of the Dock Tax would bring up the rear of all calamity, which unjuſt or unequal Taxes may keep in full march againſt the living and ability to live of the middling man; and leſt ſuch Taxes ſhould not caſt him low enough and grind him into more abject poverty and conſequently ſubmiſſion, the augmentation of the Dock Tax would enhance firſt his rent, then his bread, his butter, his cheeſe, his corn, his malt, his cyder, his vegetables; nay, every article which Briſtol itſelf, does not produce or grow; and all this to enable Mr. Alderman Daniel, and the reſt of the White-Lion Club who join with him to pocket Eight per cent. upon their ſhares. In auſpiciouſly for the White-Lion Club, the Mob, which themſelves had contributed ſo much to raiſe, and who were further irritated by outrageous aggreſſions commenced by thoſe aſſembled within the White-Lion, conceived they might as well call out ſomething that had ſome meaning, ſomething which they felt; and therefore they called out "No Dock Tax!" and, upon reflecting, that True Blue had been a principal cauſe of this Taxation, and which would be the moſt tyrannic and unprincipled Taxation ever known, they actually bent their noiſe againſt Mr. Bathurſt and the reſt of the White-Lion Club; for-

getting the "No Popery," which had been paſted upon every wall, and which was loudly, diſgracefully, infamouſly, and illegally bawled out upon the Huſtings, even by one of your Aldermen*. And here let me do juſtice to the honour and propriety of Mr. Baillie:—In that gentleman's ſeveral addreſſes, you perceive no whining cant about Church, and King, and Conſtitution having been attacked, inſulted, or violated; whilſt in the addreſſes of the White-Lion Club, you ſee that inflammatory and hypocritical lie, blazoned out and nothing elſe. I may admit the perfect Independence of Mr. Baillie; His Vote in favour of Lord Melville, who, was indeed miraculouſly acquitted, may be conſidered as venial, and I ſhall not preſume even to cenſure that Vote; but in my future obſervations reſpecting a pretended Independent Club, I ſhall humbly attempt to develope ſomewhat of the interior of another piece of mill-work, by which the Freemen and Freeholders of the city of Briſtol, agreeably to the elegant, and certainly expreſſive phraſeology of one of the members of that Club, "are done without."—Many of the White-Lion Club deſired to blind and hoodwink the people and to induce a tame ſubmiſſion to their Dock Propoſitions; they thought, happily, they wrongly thought, "No Popery," would ſerve their turn; but I cannot with any ſort of ſatisfaction exclaim, "for 'tis the ſport to have the engineer hoiſt with his own petar."

Notwithſtanding then, the terrific influence of the Factions, I have always thought, gentlemen, and truſt to be permitted ſtill to think, that the beſt mode of treating a ſubject is to render it as familiar as poſſible—a familiar diſcuſſion guards us againſt ſophiſtry and deluſion.

* But the more brutal and outrageous, who offered the personal violence to Mr. Bathurſt, had been influenced, I have no doubt to commit that enormity by the yell of "No Popery," set up by the Alderman alluded to—the fellow who threw the Bludgeon only mistook his man.

I may be allowed therefore to ſtate, ſhortly, the language which one of the Dock Company, in ſoliciting the concurrence of a man in ſimilar circumſtances with myſelf, but whom, however, he might care whether he inſulted or not, as well as oppreſſed, might be ſuppoſed to have uſed. Perhaps he might ſpeak to him in language not very remote from the truth of that which I thus have preſumed him to have held.

"Sir," he might have proceeded to ſay, "I think you "would greatly benefit by a little Scheme ſeveral of us "opulent men have taken into our heads, by virtue of "which with a little management, having a member of "Parliament expreſsly our devoted ſervant, we may put "Eight per cent. upon any capital we may advance, "and which we do not at preſent know how otherwiſe "to employ, ſnugly into our pockets; and as the Funds "are unſafe, Land ſo high, and Trade ſo precarious, we "think ſuch an Intereſt a very pretty thing. We do not "however in the firſt inſtance mean to diſcover all we "intend, and therefore have gloſſed over our intentions ſo "well, that the Scheme will be taken by ſimple "people for ſomething very grand, very improving to the "City, and not only highly uſeful, but, indiſpenſibly "neceſſary to its preſent well-being, and future proſperity. "Beſides, Sir, ſeveral, and indeed many of us, poſſeſs ſome "very tall ſhips of burthen, in which are imported the "ſugars, and rums you purchaſe ſo cheaply at our hands; "and we are willing to believe that bearing only on the "mud, tends to the ſtraining thoſe larger veſſels, render-"ing them leſs durable, and conſequently occaſioning "conſiderable expence to thoſe who uſe them of ſuch a "magnitude; though, to be ſure, it ſignifies not two "ſtraws as to thoſe of ſmaller burthen; but which how-"ever we fully intend ſhall contribute to defray the "expence of averting an injury to which our large veſſels, "only, are liable."

" In the end, this will very much conduce to our profit, " for we have a proſpect of touching Eight per cent. and " the certain ſecurity of Six per cent. upon whatever ſum " we may chuſe to lay out. Now, Sir, you, although " only an inhabitant muſt benefit too, by all this, as well " as every houſekeeper, more eſpecially as we fully intend, " as you will perceive by our Schedules, to lay a Tax upon " articles of neceſſity, ſupport, and conſumption, which " no family can poſſibly diſpenſe with. You will per- " ceive our intentions and our rapacity by the printed " Schedules; but, unleſs we had Mr. Bathurſt with " us, and well knowing that the people will not dare " to murmur, it would be ſomewhat bareface to thruſt " proviſions into the Schedule; nevertheleſs, you will there " perceive, that BACON, BEEF, BUTTER, CHEESE, CORN OF " ALL SORTS are objects of our mercileſs avidity, and are in- " tended to be rated as well as every article of houſhold " uſe, ſuch as KELP, TALLOW, POT-ASH, the ingredients of " SOAP, CANDLES, &c. &c. We intend to diſguiſe the af- " fair with ſuch artifice, that people obſerving how little is " attached to each article, will forget, that two littles may " make more, and, that more doubled may make much. " So convinced are we, as we are ſure of the aid of Mr. " Bathurſt, (who is a man of buſineſs you know) and of the " ſtupid ſubmiſſion of the people, that we ſhall at laſt " make a good job of it, that we have adviſed ſeveral ladies " who are our particular friends to lay out a part of their prin- " cipals, in enſuring to themſelves a good annuity, and " the more particularly ſo, as we ſhall omit no op- " portunity of attempting, even by new Rates and " Duties, to enforce Taxation of every article of uſe or " conſumption, which Mr. Bathurſt may enable us to " procure to be rated."

In theſe words might this Gentleman repreſenting the Dock Company be proceeding; but ſome reaſonable houſekeeper may readily have been ſuppoſed to have interrupted him in a language ſomewhat ſimilar to that following, and which may be thought not very improper, though not altogether according with that of the Dock Directors, however that company, and the majority of the White-Lion Club, may deem it to be ſeditious, and to favour of Popery and Toleration.

" Mr. Repreſentative of the Dock Company! It ſeems to me, " that you and your colleagues, animated no doubt, by the " pureſt regard for the general welfare of the city, hold " in view two moſt patriotic meaſures. One to lay " out at large intereſt to be certainly acquired, indepen- " dently of the riſque of trade, variation of funds, &c. " ſuch ſurplus capital as cannot with ſo much advantage be " otherwiſe employed. The other, to compel all the " inhabitants of the city to contribute to enſure the acqui- " ſition of certain emoluments, advantages, and ſavings, " which the Dock Company, and that, only, can pre- " ſently or remotely experience: in other words, leſs me- " thodical, indeed, but no leſs true, you would compel " the inhabitants to lay down the ſtake while you ſtand by " and take up the winnings; or, you would compel me to " pay the Rent and Taxes and ſtock the farm, while you " carefully exact the profits of the cultivation. He only, " who is to reap, let him, only, ſow, ſay I; he, only, who " is to have the profit, let him, only, take the riſque of " the loſs, ſay I further. My loſs ought not in this caſe " to be your gain, and for my life I cannot ſee, why you " ſhould twirl me, as the White-Lion Club has twirled " the Freeholders and Freemen, round your finger like a " piece of wet brown paper. It ſeems to me, that you

" gentlemen, the Dock Company, are certainly and pre-
" ſently benefited, and to ſay nothing of old grievances, I
" abhor theſe general tonnages and poundages upon rents of
" houſes, which, admitting they may, hereafter, tend to gene-
" ral good, immediately, create the greateſt injuſtice, ſince,
" they compel me to pay for a benefit, which at theſe times
" I can ill afford to pay for: every man would chuſe to
" poſſeſs a Lottery Ticket, but what man would be juſtified in
" harraſſing himſelf and diſtreſſing his family in order to
" buy one: yet, many are the men you will harraſs, and,
" many are the families you will diſtreſs by the compulſory
" means you reſort to, in order to compel their aid to
" ſecure your certain benefits and their own uncertain,
" nay, hopeleſs advantage."

" Recollect Sir, and do not allow a deſperate and un-
" relenting avarice to obſcure the memory, your blood-
" ſtained Bridge; that horrible triumph of a corporate and
" excluſive Spirit, yet ſtartles us: but I cannot think a
" military will again be found to obey any ſanguinary
" mandate by which a number of innocent and unfortu-
" nate Souls are to be ſent to their account, like Hamlet's
" father, unwaſhed, unappointed, unannealed, that you,
" Sir, and thoſe whom you repreſent, may be enabled to
" wring from induſtry, that money which induſtry can
" ill ſpare, to add to that heap of opulence, which opu-
" lence cannot by ſuch means honeſtly deſire to augment."

Every one muſt admit, that the language imputed to the member of the Dock Company cannot be very remote from the truth, however it be impertinent, diſhoneſt, tyrannical and unjuſt, and I truſt that every one will perceive the reply of the inhabitant to be ſtrictly juſt, reaſonable and unanſwerable in point of argument and fact.

Gentlemen, I ſhall aſſume as a general poſition that an Act of Parliament cannot render the language of a Dock Director unjuſt, furtive, and oppreſſive in itſelf, other than unjuſt, furtive and oppreſſive. It is monſtrous that men do not with one univerſal impulſe revolt at Uſury and Oppreſſion. Uſury and oppreſſion goaded the Roman People into Rebellion againſt partrician authority. Ireland, uniformly plundered and oppreſſed, was at length jobbed into rebellion. Goaded by Farmers General and undertakers of Taxes, France found, even in Rebellion, ſilky ſoftneſs when compared with her own oppreſſed and exhauſted ſtate: and, are the conſpiracies of thoſe of the rich who are unprincipled, againſt poverty in this country, to put home this fearful, nay, dreadful queſtion, whether it be better to ſuffer the eternal and grinding proſcription of ſuch inſatiable and unprincipled avarice, or, to take the horrid chance which a deſperate Revolution may offer? I, for one, moſt earneſtly deprecate that fatal hour; and I thus, energetically, crave leave to warn men of the terrible penalty, that may attend the unrelenting exaction of Taxes and Rates upon proviſions and neceſſaries, or any other equally unjuſtifiable Rates and Taxes.

The good ſenſe of ſome men, wealthy, and, indeed of great influence, whom I could name, would have reſiſted upon the ſoundeſt principles the *whole Dock Scheme;* but they have been unattended to: ſtill, to thoſe who from the firſt agitation of the deſign oppoſed it, the Inhabitants are indebted for ſome of the moſt ſalutary modifications of the Bills as they once ſtood and as they now ſtand. Thoſe men will do well ſtill to continue their vigilant care founded at once in rectitude of thinking, and upon real, ſolid and enlarged commercial information.

I am juſtified, however, in ſtating my belief, that the oppoſition to the Dock Bill, by ſome of thoſe who now

diſſent from, and who were once the warmeſt partizans of the Scheme, and who are alſo members of the White-Lion Club, and who further have divided, if not receded from that deteſtable conſpiracy againſt our Rights and Privileges; I ſay, I am juſtified in a belief, that ſuch oppoſition by ſuch men is ſcarcely real and that ſuch will be ineffectual; for, either the oppoſition is to be founded in principle, or, it is not; if founded in principle, it muſt be on one of theſe two points; either to oppoſe the Bill altogether, or to enforce a performance of the original contract, framed by the firſt Bill; whereas, we ſee on the part of the Committee appointed to confer with the Dock Directors, a diſpoſition to conciliate that body. Gentlemen, you are thus mocked and inſulted with an oppoſition, and I truſt, you will not ſuffer yourſelves to be deluded with a ſhew of any oppoſition, ſhort of either legally oppoſing the Scheme in toto, or oppoſing every alteration of the original Act; that is to ſay, ſuppoſing legal, manly, ſenſible and decided oppoſition to the original Act be too late. I hate theſe half way meeters of queſtions—it is either right or wrong, and in the oppoſition now propoſed by ſome of the White Lion Club, I ſee too much of a diſpoſition to ſanction the wrong.

Viewing the principles of the White-Lion Club as the reſult of a conſpiracy againſt the Liberties aud Properties of the Freemen and Freeholders of the city, to deprive them of, or to render nugatory their elective Franchiſe, as is in truth the real fact, I always conſidered that Club as chiefly ſanctioning the Dock Scheme as formed to ſerve the purpoſe of an electioneering Engine, and like the Jacobin Club obeying a power and calculated to yield to impulſes, which no one could ſay whence they proceeded or how they were promoted. The late diviſion and ſeceſſions have too well realized my particular view. On this head, I could ſay

more, but the whole will in time, out; tho' I firmly believe the principles of that Club to be the ſame and unchanged—they are inimical to civil and religious Liberty, and therefore inimical to the welfare and happineſs of mankind; and in this way I am juſtified in aſſerting, that every Club profeſſing ſuch principles is a deteſtable conſpiracy againſt ſociety.

If public and private Taxation, are thus to be permitted on every pretence to be augmented, the neceſſaries of life muſt become liable to be raiſed to that enormous increaſe, that the labour and the induſtry of the City will become ſo unprofitable and ſo uſeleſs, as that the opinion will be ſtill more current, however falſe, that riches and opulence in this Country only exiſt for the diſtreſs and oppreſſion of thoſe who poſſeſs neither.

I inſiſt, that whatever Tax be enforced, the poor man who produces nothing muſt pay it. Whatever the poor man *must* poſſeſs or uſe, and which is ſubject to a Tax, the poor man pays that Tax, directly. Whatever Tax be paid in the firſt inſtance by the more opulent man, a trader, he conſiders that Tax as additional capital upon the embarkation of which in trade he alſo conſiders himſelf to be entitled to a certain profit. Whatever article therefore that opulent trader deals in, and which ſhall be taxed, although the poor man does not uſe or conſume it, the poor man pays the Tax upon it, indirectly—for, the trader will not ſuffer himſelf to be a loſer; and if the rich are prevented by Taxation from purchaſing ſo as to give the trader his uſual profit; he lays the Tax upon the articles of general conſumption: thus the poor man eventually pays the Tax, and thus I am juſtified in ſaying, that by theſe ſpeculations of the rich, the poor man eventually becomes the ſufferer, and ſo contributes to enſure the Dock Com-

pany the profit to arise by taxing those whom our increasing work-houses and our infirmaries, which may be considered the worst kind of work-house hospitals, sufficiently shew cannot bear further Taxation.

There is one most tyrannical and malignant feature, which distinguishes the Bristol Dock Bills, I hope from every other Dock Bill that was ever framed. It is this, that every vessel *must avail itself* of the pretended advantages held out by the improvement, whether it really desire those advantanges or not; whereas the Bills constituting the London Docks, and London West-India Docks, leave at least an alternative. The ship if Foreign, will be received into the Docks, and it is expected of course to pay for the proffered Benefits, but if it be the will of the consigner that the ship do not accept the proffered advantage, it is allowed to pass to the Quay, and there unload as usual. The Bristol Port Bills, have induced me to suppose, that a machiavellian policy had influenced some of the monopolists of this port and induced their desire, under the pretence of public good, to repulse all trade whatever, except that necessary trade, which those in possession of it must in consequence of the population continue to command. Thus, by a stroke of low cunning, by Port Duties and Expences at once ruinous and destructive, cutting off the probability of successful competition. Gentlemen, the Dock Company already laugh at you—they went to the public meeting for opposing the Bill, for the purpose of laughing at you; they insult your impotence of resistance; they tell you, that *they will* procure their Bill to pass: and as to the statement which has been published by one of themselves, they say, let him write on, we care not,—we know our strength—Mr. BATHURST will get us through,—no opposition in the House of Commons needs to give us alarm: and as to opposition here, the people too well remember their blood boltered Bridge

to offer any. To ſuch language, Mr. Bathurſt perhaps with better intentions than to have been merely the inſtrument of ſo unprincipled a ſet, might have become a victim, notwithſtanding, he too advanced the ſuppoſition of the Church having been endangered by the late wiſe and enlightened miniſtry.

Gentlemen, you all have heard of the Corvée of Old France; as well as of the abject ſlavery of New France, the conſequence of a revolution, to which I am afraid we are hourly approaching. The Corvée, gentlemen, was a compulſory Law, which compelled the poor and middling man to make and maintain in repair the Public Road for the rich man to uſe and frequent, but along which the wretched peaſant could not himſelf have a deſire to travel—for he never travelled from a want of the means—juſt ſo, the Dock Directors, and all thoſe who ſupport the Dock Company deſire to compel you to make Locks and Canals and to Dam Rivers for the benefit of the rich monopoliſt, but which muſt be of the greateſt injury to the poor, and middling man ſince ſuch can never benefit by theſe ſpeculations.

Improvement is a vague and uncertain term—it is very nearly related to injury; Mr. Bathurſt became perplexed and confounded, but he choſe the ſafer ſolution of the difficulty: the White-Lion Club preponderated, and the odious, and, under all circumſtances, ridiculous project of the Tax, ſtill grew up and increaſed in favour and in ſtature under his auſpicies.

The "Plain ſtatement," manifeſtly, indeed, written by one of themſelves, every where betrays a ſort of reaſoning, which, it may be conceived a gang of footpads after having robbed a man, might hold, as to whether they ſhould not, alſo, knock him on the head. The ſtatement leans to the merciful ſide, and will go no farther in iniquity—it will not budge againſt conſcience; and though the ſtatement would not

encourage an abſolute knocking on the head, it admits the propriety of our having been ſo far plundered. Gentlemen, one object of the Dock Scheme was to try how far the influence of opulence could go, to render you ſubſervient to the baſe uſes to which opulence would put you—it wiſhed, it deſired, to legalize Uſury, and proſtituted the name of Improvement to pander to its avarice; like other uſurers, they felt the proverb begin to apply to their Scheme—"Graſp all, loſe all," ſtruck home, and then the plain ſtatement of facts, alarmed for the more cautious of the firm, is publiſhed, and evincing neither ſhame, remorſe, recantation, or contrition, boldly tells you of Improvement, impudently implies a right to Tax you ſo far, but no further, and, in my humble opinion would ſtill confirm the DELUSION, that ſome Improvement of the Harbour to which the *Inhabitants* ought to have been compelled to contribute, was, and is eſſential to the Welfare and Proſperity of Briſtol.

I am not an enemy however to real Improvement be it for utility, grace, or beauty—that would indeed be barbariſm—that very barbariſm with which I would accuſe the preſent, or any Adminiſtration who with the timidity of whining ideots, or, rather, with the hypocritical cant of knaves paralyze one-fourth of the power of the State—I would not repel Improvement, like

> "Th' envious Fiend that ſtrides the ſcowling Blaſt
> "And blights i' the Bud, th' op'ning Blooms of Spring."

But in God's name, let uncertain or ſpeculative Improvement be at the coſt of thoſe, only, who are, or who may be well convinced of the profit which may await it.

But, Gentlemen, I am about to ſtate to you a fact, and of which I do not think a due uſe has been made—THE TONNAGE OF THE TRADE OF BRISTOL IS AGAINST THE IMPROVEMENT.

This was aſſerted by the late Mr. Gibbons, and by the late Mr. T. Protheroe, men of the higheſt veracity, reſpectability, and commercial knowledge; but, they were honeſt and upright men, as well as extenſive and opulent traders, and their opinion was founded upon another adage, which only ſpeculators whom avarice may blind, and whom only a corrupt, venal, cunning, unprincipled, and barbarous Adminiſtation, would have encouraged, too often overlook, deſpiſe, or forget, namely—"Gold may be bought too dear."

Facts cannot too often be ſtated; with the White-Lion Club, the Dock Scheme was an electioneering Machine; with the Dock Company itſelf it was a mode of realizing ſpeculation, and of legalizing an uſurious intereſt, upon otherwiſe idle capital; with both it was a meaſure to create and to preſerve influence, dependence, patronage and monopoly; in all, or in either of which relations, the whole Dock Scheme ought to be deſpiſed, rejected, and abandoned by every honourable and ſenſible man.

Gentlemen, you will think no language to ſtrong to deſignate, emphatically to deſignate, the deſperate, and atrocious artifices of ſome of theſe Dockers.

Let the following queſtions be anſwered, and which I ſhall put in a few words—the affirmative will affix a ſeal of imfamy to the Dock Charter, which nothing can efface, but your abhorrence at ſuch a Charter, being further enlarged or ſanctioned, and your regret that one ſhould ever have been confirmed.

Have not the Dock Shares been ſold at a large Diſcount?

Are not the purchaſers of thoſe Shares, the moſt ſtrenuous abettors of the New-Bill?

But gentlemen, I hardly dare mention the following atrocious fact. The enormity has reached me—I hope and truſt it is untrue—to aid the Dock Company, and conſequently to opperate by way of bribe, to inſure an iniquitous ſanction of every pernicious vote, the Government has actually advanced, or influenced others to advance, that Company £60,000!!! Where are your liberties, where are your properties now? Who is to withſtand the almighty Dock Company, when ſupported by a corrupt and corrupting Miniſtry? Who is to withſtand uſurers that would deſtroy us?

Gentlemen, I intended to uſe ſtrong argument and ſtrong language, but I beg to condenſe what I have ſaid into the form of propoſitions, and to enforce them as moſt particularly wor- thy your conſideration: viz.

I.—That if all the views of the Dock Company are, or ſhall be effected, a dangerous and unconſtitutional conſpiracy will have been formed, for the *plunder of this City by a few men, wealthly, indeed, but unprincipled*; and this, under the fallacious pretext of benefiting the city, but in reality to benefit a few Individuals who are members of the Dock Company.

II.—That it is the duty of every individual to reſiſt every unjuſt conſpiracy by every means, which his prudence may ſuggeſt or dictate.

III.—That it ought to be received and adopted as an undoubted truth, founded at once in integrity of principle, and on the unalterable baſis of common ſenſe, that all advantages ought to be reciprocal betwixt Man and Man.

IV.—That it appears, that the Advantages deſired in reſpect of the Alteration of this Port, are all on the

ſide of the Dock Company, and that therefore, the foregoing propoſition is violated and renounced, in ſo far, as that the inhabitants of this city, are or may be compelled to contribute, at their own certain privation and loſs, to the profits and emoluments of the Dock Company.

V.—That although it be ſaid, that the Dock Scheme will eventually benefit the city, that point is by no means clear, ſince the city has decreaſed in its commercial proſperity, from other cauſes than the inconveniences of its Harbour, and amongſt thoſe cauſes, the amount of Port Expences is not the leaſt, and which muſt be augmented by the Dock ſpeculation.

VI.—That the natural ſurrounding population muſt enſure a conſumption of imported articles, the Tax upon which, will, with the Tax upon the Inhabitants, be ſufficient to pay an intereſt to the Dock Company, very independently of any further benefit the Trade of Briſtol may experience; and, therefore, it ſtill more clearly appears, that the Dock Company were only animated by a deſire to derive a benefit by a Taxation of the Inhabitants of Briſtol, of its Vicinity, and of thoſe within the range of its market.

POSTSCRIPT.

HAVING perſonally known Mr. Gutch, the editor of Felix Farley's Briſtol Journal, I have obſerved with ſome regret, his explicit denial of "No Popery," having been uſed and adopted as a watch-word by the White-Lion Club,—ſurely Mr. Gutch could not have printed the note of the pealing *tocsin*, that appeared on the walls of many conſpicuous parts of the City. If Mr. Gutch did not print that infernal alarum, who did? and if it were printed, and glaring on every wall *before* the Election, will Mr. Gutch ſtill ſay, that there was no ſuch watch-word made uſe of? This is matter of fact. I do aſſert, and have aſſerted that the hideous yawn of death and havock did appear in the "Fatal Blue," of the White-Lion Club.—This obſervation cannot be out of place, as Felix Farley's Journal has hitherto been deemed authority, at leaſt for local information, "But the greateſt is behind."—Will Mr. Gutch too deny, that one of the Aldermen vociferated "No Popery! No Popery!" ſeveral times? When, therefore, Mr. Gutch's friends call out "No Popery!" nothing is intended but a pious and meek ejaculation; but when the inſulted, cajoled, and deluded populace call out "No Dock Tax! No Peculation!" then, to be ſure, they are to be deemed worthy indiſcriminate deſtruction by Fire and by Sword.

Sir John Jarvis has with much candour, and to his own honour as I think, however, I may humbly diſapprove of his pretenſions to repreſent this city, declared, THAT THE NECESSITY FOR CALLING OUT THE MILITARY WAS NOT APPARENT; yet I can vouch from perſonal obſervation, that a part of his Corp was on duty, and in their ranks in the midſt of the city; this however, might be unknown to Sir John—I ſtate the fact without comment, as no blame whatever can attach to thoſe of the Military who did muſter, whatever of reprobation and that is not light, thoſe may merit with whom the calling out the Military originated.

Surely, Colonel Baillie muſt have had quite as much opportunity of knowing the truth of the neceſſity for calling out one part of his mocked conſtituents, for the avowed purpoſe of putting to death the other, and yet we do not find, that like Sir John Jarvis, the Colonel has thought it worth while to enter into any explanation of his own facility, upon an affair ſo weighty as that of the violation by ſomebody of an Act of Parliament. I certainly ſhall think it my duty to ſtate this apparently unconſtitutional glaring infringement of the law to his Majeſty's Miniſters, or to ſome perſon competent to bring the queſtion before Parliament, with this certain teſtimony, and that of Sir John Jarvis already publiſhed: That the Military on the Day of Election, were called out and ſummoned from their Quarters without the leaſt apparent Riot or intention of Riot on the part of the people, to juſtify ſo important a meaſure.

Here is matter enough for Mr. Gutch to comment upon, and which is more worthy his own or his correſpondent's obſervations as being matter more within his ſphere of comprehenſion and knowledge than the dignified ema-

nations of the enlightened mind of an exalted Stateſman. I truſt the time is approaching when the great emulation of all Governments will be to know no Subject but the loyal Subject, and to deſignate no man as a criminal until he has committed a crime. Lord Grenville may indeed be cenſured for the pardonable but hopeleſs attempt to convince or to inſtruct a bigot by inculcating ſome of the univerſally applicable principles of Chriſtianity; but the inſolence of the member of a Religious Society, who replied to his Lordſhip's letter to Doctor Gaſkin, can only be equalled by the ſtupid but ſelfiſh intolerance of the ſentiments it contains.

That able and impartial writer, Mr. Cobbett, and who to a maſculine underſtanding, adds a reſolution patriotic and determined to ſanction no man, nor any meaſure, who, in his opinion, may have forfeited every claim to honeſt ſanction; and the Edinburgh Reviewers have already by their pens confirmed MY reprobation of the unjuſt denial of rank to the Catholic officer who ſhould have founded his merit upon the life he may have loyally devoted to the ſervice of his country. It is a grateful conſolation to have been thus conſpicuous on the ſide of the oppreſſed, the able, the learned, and the wiſe.

The fifteen hundred addreſſers (one fortieth part of the population of this city) who, of all other addreſſers, and thoſe are not I believe, paſſing twenty, only, have inſulted the King by inſulting the Prince, as was truly obſerved in a letter from Thornbury, could not appal me. On the day the addreſs was moved, I had the chriſtian diſpenſation which teaches charity to all mankind, on my ſide; I had the dignified and exalted wiſdom of many great, and many good men in the Senate, on my ſide; above all, I had a mind conſcious of its own rectitude of intention, to ſupport

me; and not abaſhed by inſolence, ignorance, contumely or vulgarity, I oppoſed my humble and loyal voice to artifice, bigotry, falſehood, injuſtice and intolerance.—What I did on that day, I glory to have done; and if thoſe men who *think* with me had done as much, the "two, the little "two" would have been leſs conſpicuous for honor and independence, indeed, but the addreſs would have been as little ſanctioned as it was ill-ſupported by any baſis of religion, of rectitude, or of truth.

And now Gentlemen, I crave leave to ſay a very few words reſpecting a very inſignificant ſubject—myſelf—My real friends and of ſuch in this city I may boaſt my ſhare, have urged me to ſay ſomething.

Gentlemen, I find it neceſſary, indeed, to ſay ſomething to claim your protection againſt the ill-intended inſinuations of ſome of thoſe who cannot be *my* friends, and who are as little yours; as well as to juſtify thoſe friends in the ſupport they have hitherto magnanimouſly afforded me.

At no period of my life have I in word, or in deed, directly or indirectly, been hoſtile towards the principles of our really valuable conſtitution; and at every period and in every ſituation of my life, have I been hoſtile to the corruptions, that may hourly tend to diminiſh our veneration for the fineſt body of public law, that ever emanated from the mind of an honeſt, an able, a free and an intrepid people; a people who were free becauſe they were honeſt, becauſe they were able and becauſe they were intrepid. Honeſty and Ability without courage are like a year without an autumn—the promiſe of much without the accompliſhment of aught.

If therefore we are ſtill to have a conſtitution to venerate, let us one and all avow our determination intrepidly to

support it againſt fraud, venality, ſycophancy and corruption; Weſtminſter has ſet you a great example, and could another Burdett be found, that example if it could not be eclipſed, would not leave Weſtminſter ſo glorious, and almoſt ſo excluſive an honour, as that of ſending to Parliament a virtuous repreſentative of the people.

FINIS.